

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-04

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 INR-05 PRS-01 CIAE-00 PM-03 RSC-01

DODE-00 /029 W

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R 091430Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY MASERU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4601

INFO AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMSASSY PRETORIA

S E C R E T MASERU 0033

LIMDIS

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: TAGS: PINS, PGOV, LT

SUBJ: POLICE TRANSFERS INDICATE JONATHAN TIGHTENING GRIP

1. SUMMARY. INFORMED SOURCE IN WHOM WE HAVE GREATEST CONFIDENCE CALLED AT EMBASSY JANUARY 9 TO REPORT TRANSFERS IN LESOTHO POLICE ORGANIZATION WHICH HE BELIEVES HAVE DISTURBING IMPLICATIONS FOR DOMESTIC SECURITY. EMBASSY CONCURS WITH THIS ASSESSMENT AND BELIEVES TRANSFERS MAY BE EFFORT BY PRIME MINISTER JONATHAN TO TIGHTEN GRIP ON COUNTRY TO INSURE OUTCOME FAVORABLE TO HIM OF NATIONAL COMMISSION'S REVIEW ON NEW SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT FOR LESOTHO. END SUMMARY.

2. SOURCE REPORTS THAT ON JANUARY 8, UNDER ORDERS OF PRIME MINISTER JONATHAN, SOME TWENTY OF MORE COMPETENT, NONPOLITICAL POLICE OFFICERS OF GRADE OF MAJOR OR BELOW, INCLUDING WARRANT OFFICERS, WERE TRANSFERRED FROM FIELD POSITIONS TO STAFFS OF POLICE TRAINING INSTITUTIONS OR TO OTHER, NON-COMMAND POSITIONS. THEY WERE REPLACED BY POLICE OFFICERS KNOWN TO HAVE FIRST LOYALTIES TO JONATHAN AND HIS BASUTOLAND NATIONAL PARTY (BNP).

3. SOURCE BELIEVES THAT PURPOSE OF TRANSFERS WAS TO ENABLE  
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JONATHAN COUNT ON FRIENDLY POLICE IN ALL OR MOST

LOCALITIES TO REGULATE WHO WILL APPEAR BEFORE NATIONAL COMMISSION, WHICH IS SUPPOSED SOON TO BEGIN CONSULTING PEOPLE ON FORM NEW LESOTHO GOVERNMENT SHOULD TAKE.

RM EQUALLY DISTURBING IS SOURCE'S REPORT THAT GOL PLANNING TO BEEF UP POLICE RESERVISTS, OR "PEACE CORPS," AND HAS ORDERED 4500 UNIFORMS FOR THEM. WHETHER OR NOT THEY WILL RECEIVE ARMS IS NOT YET KNOWN.

5. SOURCE REPORTED ALSO THAT BNP REGULARS WHO PUT JONATHAN IN POWER UNHAPPY WITH DECLINE IN PARTY ORGANIZATION, APPOINTMENT OF NON-PARTY CIVIL SERVANTS AS MINISTERS, AND SACKING AS FOREIGN MINISTER OF POPULAR PARTY LEADER PLETE PLETE. SOURCES BELIEVES JONATHAN UNDER PRESSURE FROM BNP REGULARS TO DO SOMETHING FOR PARTY AND THAT THEY MAY BE NULLIFIED THAT POLICE CAN NOW BE COUNTED ON TO IGNORE LEGAL OFFENCES BY BNP MEMBERS. HE COMMENTED THAT LEGITIMATE

POLICE FUNCTIONS, SUCH AS INVESTIGATION OF CRIME, ALREADY AT VIRTUAL STANDSTILL INsofar AS BNP REGULARS OR POLICEMEN THEMSELVES MAY BE SUSPECTS.

SOURCE MUCH CONCERNED THAT SUCH OBVIOUS POLICE BIAS COULD SPUR MEMBERS OF OPPOSITION PARTIES TO RENEWED VIOLENCE.

6. COMMENT. SOURCE IS LEVEL-HEADED AND EXPERIENCED INSIDE OBSERVER OF LESOTHO SCENE. WE AGREE WITH HIS ASSESSMENT THAT POLICE TRANSFERS HAVE DISTURBING IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE SECURITY AS POLICE FORCE ADHERING STRICTLY TO JONATHAN/BNP LOYALTIES GREATLY ENHANCES CHANCES OF FURTHER VIOLENCE. APPARENT EXPANSION AND GLORIFICATION OF POLICE RESERVISTS EQUALLY OF CONCERN AS THIS UNDISCIPLINED, UNTRAINED CREW HAS INFINITE CAPACITY FOR INCITING VIOLENCE AMONG GOVERNMENT'S POLITICAL OPPONENTS. TRANSFERS APPEAR TO INDICATE JONATHAN DETERMINED TO RETAIN POWER, USING NATIONAL COMMISSION EXERCISE TO ENHANCE HIS POSITION.  
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**TAGS:** PINS, PGOV, LT  
**To:** STATE  
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